

## 1 Timothy 2:1-8 Bible Study Commentary – Inductive Questions

### I. Pray for all (1-3)

#### Cross-References

Romans 8:26 – Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Matthew 6:7 – And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Ephesians 6:18 – Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

Colossians 4:2 – Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Psalms 46:10 – “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Proverbs 29:11 – A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

Psalms 37:7 – Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

#### Verse by Verse Commentary

1. First of all – Paul is coming to a new topic in his letter to Timothy. Chapter one was primarily personal correspondence. Paul shared some personal greetings as well as personal exhortations to Timothy regarding Timothy’s walk with the Lord and actions in the church. Now Paul starts to move to issues regarding the whole church. The following instructions are not merely intended for Timothy, but they are for everyone in the church and are meant to prescribe proper church life.

2. Notably, the first area Paul mentions is prayer – The next few chapters Paul will mention many aspects of church life including prayer, worship, the Word, leaders, roles of men and women, common pitfalls, and more. He starts all of this with an exhortation to pray. Prayer is the invisible foundation which supports all of the other church activities. Without a proper prayer life, people are distant from God and destined to rely on their own strength and intelligence. Jesus said, “Apart from me, you can do nothing.” If a person is to be successful in God’s eyes, he must be a person of a prayer. And if a church is to be successful, it must be a praying church.

If you ask almost any pastor, what meetings are the worst attended it is the prayer meetings. This should not be. If believers are not praying, it is no wonder that churches are losing relevance and their spiritual vibrancy.

In today’s day and age, this is an especially important reminder. Many believers are heavily into politics. In many homes, Fox News is running all day. If you were to mention the government in these houses, you may then hear many complaints. It is certain the US government has many problems, as do all nations.

In New Testament times, the Roman Empire was far worse than almost any national government today. And yet Paul does not advise a revolution. He doesn’t suggest protests or reforms or activism. Instead, he simply says to pray. Many of the problems we see in the world today cannot be solved by activism. Certainly even fewer can

be solved by talking or complaining. Instead believers need to become prayer warriors. When we see issues in our societies, our first reaction should be to turn to God, to come before His throne and plead for His mercy.

3. Entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings... – Four different kinds of prayers are mentioned. Why didn't Paul just say, "prayers?" Using several different words shows us that the content of prayer is to be rich and varied. As believers, we should seek a balanced prayer life. If we are balanced in our prayer lives, then that means we are praying different kinds of prayers to God on a regular basis.

In a quality relationship, communication is essential. But if that communication is all about one topic or one type of communication then problems will begin to emerge. For example, if a couple starts a business together they will naturally talk a lot about the details of the business. But if they allow business conversations to take over to the exclusion of everything else, their relationship will have issues.

Some believers primarily come to God in prayer to ask for physical help in times of need. Requests may include:

- Please help me with my exam.
- Please help me in my job.
- Please give me good health.
- Please take away my pain.

God is not our slave. How would you like it if the only time your friend talked to you was when he needed help?

More advanced prayers may include:

- Please help my friend with his exam.
- Please help my brother in his job.
- Please give my grandmother good health.
- Please take away my neighbor's pain.

These are starting to get better. At least these prayers are others centered. However, they are still quite narrow in scope as they are limited to a person's own circle and to physical needs.

A more vibrant prayer life may include prayers like:

- Please use the pain in my life to give me patience and perseverance.
- Please use my grandmother's sickness to draw her to the Lord.
- Please help me to be diligent in preparing for the exam and take away my worries.
- Please give our nation's leaders wisdom and even when they aren't actively seeking you turn their hearts to make good policies.

Beyond praying for character issues and matters of spiritual importance we can talk to God directly as our friend and praise Him, thank Him, and confess to Him.

In this passage Paul mentions a few types of prayers, but there are many more as well.

Application: Evaluate your prayer life and consider if most of your prayers are about yourself and/or about physical situations. If so, consider more about others and spiritual issues during your prayer time.

4. Pray for leaders – Sometimes we may feel disgusted when we look at our countries' political leaders. This feeling can lead to insecurity, anger, resentment, or complaint. Rather than complaining, it is far better to get

down on our knees and come before our Father and ask for His mercy and guidance for our nation and its leaders.

**Application:** Here is a very simple, but powerful application. Every time you read a news story and learn about the mistakes/corruption/bad choices of a leader instead of complaining or getting angry, take thirty seconds to pray about it. Not only does God hear your prayers, but this will drastically change your own attitude and outlook as well.

5. Lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity – Paul’s instruction here is very interesting. He seems to be telling the church, “instead of getting flustered and upset about the situations in society around you, calm down and pray.” We don’t need to react in fear or worry whenever bad news hits the headlines. Neither do we need to allow ourselves to get drawn into anonymous online debates.

As much as the church at that time needed to live a calm and tranquil life, how much more now! With the internet, media, electronics, social media, and even electronic lights, it is so much easier to be distracted and busy doing pointless things now than it was then.

What does this command mean for us in a digital saturated age? I am not sure that I know the answer, but I think that we can look in to see if our hearts are quiet or abuzz. Here are a few questions you might ask yourself to consider whether you are leading a tranquil and quiet life:

- Do I sleep enough at night? When I go to bed can I refrain from checking my phone and other media?
- When I lay down is my mind calm or filled with worries, stress, and data overflow keeping me awake?
- Do I make regular time for reading God’s Word?
- Am I able to calm my mind and pray and meditate on God without being distracted?
- Do I spend more time on social media or studying the Bible?
- What is the first thing I want to do in the morning (and the last thing at night?)
- How do I feel if I cannot check my phone for a long period of time?

Electronics have in many ways rewired our brains. Some of the effects are not always good and include problems like short attention spans, inability to focus, easy to be distracted, poor sleep habits, poor study habits, brain overload.

A simple and quiet life could also include a pleasant thirty minute conversation with your spouse or children, a nice walk by the river, simply watching your kids play and enjoying seeing them smile, etc.

**Application:** The church in Roman times was not to allow the problems in their society to distract them from the priority of following after God. Neither should we allow our society to distract us from the Lord, whether it be politics or social media. One simple application could be to set a time of 30 minutes each work for a distraction free prayer time. Come before the Lord and don’t let anything else distract you during this time. There are many other possible applications. What do you think God is calling you to do in order to live a more tranquil and quiet life?

### Discussion Questions

- Why does Paul say “first of all” when he is already in chapter 2?
- What, if any, are the differences between entreaties, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings? Why use four words to describe prayer content?
- Who do you spend the most time praying for? What percentage of the time do you think you pray for others compared to yourselves?

- Who should we pray for? Share some practical ways to make prayer for others (even leaders and politicians) a regular aspect of your prayer life.
- How will praying for others, even unrighteous leaders, in this manner effect our own attitudes?
- What is the tie in between the latter part of verse 2 and the first parts of verses 1-2?
- What does it look like if a person is leading a tranquil and quiet life? What may the opposite look like?

## II. Jesus is our Mediator (4-6)

### Cross-References

Proverbs 11:30 – The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.

2 Peter 3:9 – He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Romans 8:34 – Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

Hebrews 8:6 – But as it is, Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent than the old as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises.

### Verse by Verse Commentary

1. God desires all to be saved – This is God’s heart desire. Just as a parent wants to have a good relationship with each child, so God wants to have a personal relationship with every person He created. But this is a two way streak. God extends the free gift of salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9.) At the same time, people have personal responsibility to accept the gift.

2. One God and one mediator between God and man – These verses discuss some of the core aspects of the gospel. God wanted all men to be saved, so He set a plan in motion. And this plan included sending His Son as an in-between. Here are some qualities that a good mediator should have:

- Understands both sides.
- Personally experienced both sides (not just a theoretical understanding)
- The best interests of both sides at heart
- Good communication skills
- A clear plan or way to bring two parties together

Jesus had all of this and much more. He acted as mediator for our salvation, and He still intercedes for us (Romans 8:34.) And we too have been given a job to reconcile the world to Him. We are not mediators, but we can act in a similar capacity as peacemakers to bring a lost world to God.

3. As Mediator, He sacrificed Himself as a ransom – With this action, we see that Jesus had the best interests of both sides at heart. He was not in it for Himself. He acted with 100% pure motivation.

Illustration: There was once a slave girl who was being sold at a market. A kind gentlemen bought her and set her free. He told her, “You are redeemed. Go on your way.” With a heart full of love for her savior, she followed him and pledged life long service saying, “My redeemer! My redeemer!”

How do you respond to Jesus’ sacrifice? It should motivate us to serve Him.

## Discussion Questions

- What can we learn about God's character from verses 4-6?
- What is the relationship between these verses and the instruction to prayer?
- What are some important qualities that good mediators have?
- Are there any areas that you need to mediate in?
- If Jesus were standing here right now, what might you say to Him about His ransom sacrifice for you?
- Explain the phrase "the testimony given at the proper time."

## III. We respond through preaching and praying (7-8)

### Cross-References

Psalms 63:4 – So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

Lamentations 3:41 – Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven.

Romans 6:13 – Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

Joshua 3:5 – Then Joshua said to the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

Psalms 66:18 – If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Proverbs 28:9 – If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

### Verse by Verse Commentary

1. For this I was appointed – There is no greater purpose. The very most impactful thing anyone can do in life is to share the good news with a person who believes. It will leave an impact for all of eternity. One common question to ask yourself to gauge the relative importance of a matter is: "what difference will this make on hundred years from now?" Sharing the gospel and training others to do the same makes a difference forever. Our degrees, money, and earthly accomplishments will fade away, but souls will not. Impacting souls is a purpose worth living for.

2. Verse 8 – Here we see several instructions:

A. Pray – Once again we see that prayer is the foundation. A person who wants to be successful for Christ must start with a foundation of prayer. All the preaching and all the effort in the world will not make a difference if God is not in it.

B. Lifting up holy hands – Lifting up hands to worship God is an outward sign of the respect and praise one feels for God in his heart. It is possible to lift up hands and not worship God. It is also possible to worship God without lifting up hands. Nonetheless it is clear that lifting up hands can be a very meaningful and visible way to express one's affection for God. Those like me who have grown up in churches where this is not common (and even frowned upon) should reconsider. Closing eyes for prayer is not even mentioned in the Bible, but is considered a good practice. Wearing nice clothes on Sunday is considered honoring to God in many denominations. Here there is a clear indication that worship can and should be physically expressed so do not let your inhibitions or worry of what others may think stop you from doing so if and when God's Spirit leads.

C. Holy hands – This speaks to the fact that a person should be consecrated to God when worshiping Him. If we are harboring sin in our hearts and at the same time belting out praise songs, it will not be pleasing to God.

Does your spouse like it if you keep saying, “I love you,” while at the same time doing things she hates? If you keep doing that saying “I love you” will become a trigger that will just annoy her.

**Application:** Before worship, spend some time to evaluate your own life and confess any sins that come to mind. In this way you can receive forgiveness and come before your King with clean hands and a pure heart. If you have been consecrated then your words will be a pleasant sound in His ears.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Why do you think Paul wants to emphasize that he is telling the truth here?
- Is this a surprising statement in some way?
- What have you been appointed to do? List out all of the things God has appointed you to do.
- Paul was very clear about his gifting and calling. Do you know your gifting? Do you know your calling? What might the purpose of “lifting up holy hands be?”
- How can you make your hands holy?
- Why the reminder “without wrath and dissension?”